

NEWS RELEASE
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ISTOOK TO OFFER STUDENT'S RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Washington, D.C. - Rep. Ernest Istook, (R-OK), will offer an amendment to the FY-96 Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations bill to discourage colleges and universities from forcing students to fund political organizations.

The amendment states that schools can not receive federal funds if they impose *compulsory* fees on students when proceeds go to outside organizations which lobby or seek to influence political campaigns.

"Over the years, a variety of schemes have emerged to extract money from students and use them to fund political agendas," Istook said. **"Students have the right to choose whether they will fund such political efforts."**

Istook said far from "gagging" students, as some have claimed, this amendment ensures students are not paying for political agendas with which they disagree.

"There's nothing wrong with a check-off, in which a student can check a box to contribute to an outside group. But mandatory fees, and 'negative check-offs' in which the student must check the box if he or she does not wish to contribute, are misleading."

Rep. Istook made it clear that the amendment would not prohibit outside and political organizations from doing their work.

"This wouldn't stop groups from raising money and getting volunteers. It merely protects students from having to fund these activities against their will, through their tuition bills."

